

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims

Claim 1. (**Currently amended**) A network stack interface for communication between software stack layers during network storage data transfer, wherein the network stack interface is defined for communication between a transport layer and ~~another~~ a target software stack layer in the software stack layers, the network stack interface comprising:

~~a first network stack interface comprising~~ a header portion and a first buffer descriptor, the header portion defining characteristics of the ~~first~~ network stack interface and the first buffer descriptor defining a data buffer, the first buffer descriptor including a memory address pointer to the data buffer, the first buffer descriptor being one of a plurality of buffer descriptors, the transport layer passing the network stack interface to a target software stack layer without bypassing software stack layers of an Open Systems Integration Reference Model (OSI model);

wherein ~~[[a]]~~ the target software stack layer uses the network stack interface to create ~~creates~~ a second network stack interface, the second network stack interface comprising ~~comprises~~ a second header portion and a second buffer descriptor, the second buffer descriptor for storing information and the memory address pointer of the target software stack layer and first buffer descriptor, and the ~~first~~ target software stack layer passes the second network stack interface to the another software stack layer without bypassing any software stack layers of the OSI model; and

wherein the passing of the created second network stack interface to the another software stack layer references the information and memory address pointer of the first buffer descriptor ~~for storage~~ stored in the second buffer descriptor of the second network stack interface, the information including memory address and length of the related buffer.

Claim 2. (Previously presented) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the header portion includes a common header portion and a layer specific header portion, the layer specific header portion defining characteristics utilized by a particular related software stack layer.

Claim 3. (Previously presented) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of buffer descriptors further includes buffer length data, the buffer length data defining a size for the data buffer referenced by the memory address pointer.

Claims 4. – 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Previously presented) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the first buffer descriptor defines transport layer header data.

Claim 10. (Previously presented) A network stack interface as recited in claim 9, wherein the transport layer header data is simple transport protocol (STP) header data.

Claims 11 – 21. (Canceled)